

In the Claims

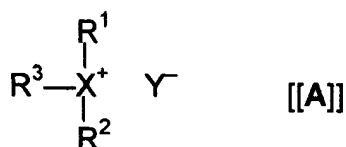
Claims 1-10 (canceled)

1        11. (Original) An aqueous solution comprising:  
2        water;  
3        at least one onium compound; and  
4                at least one additive selected from the group consisting of  
5                carboxylic acids, sulfonic acids, organophosphonic  
6                acids, phenolic compounds, ether sulfates, phosphoric  
7                acid esters, sulfonated fatty acids, sulfated fatty acids,  
8                oligocarboxylic acids, and mixtures thereof, and alkali  
9                metal salts of these compounds and amine salts of  
10               these compounds.

12. (Original) The aqueous solution of claim 11 where the treated onium compound partitions into a non-aqueous phase, and where the amount of the additive is sufficient to reduce the toxicity of the aqueous solution as compared with an identical aqueous solution having an absence of the additive.

13. (Original) The aqueous solution of claim 11 where the additive is selected from the group consisting of carboxylic acids, sulfonic acids, and mixtures thereof, alkali metal salts of these compounds and amine salts of these compounds.

1        14. (Original) The aqueous solution of claim 11 wherein the onium  
2        compound has a structure of the following formula having a cation and an anion Y<sup>-</sup>:

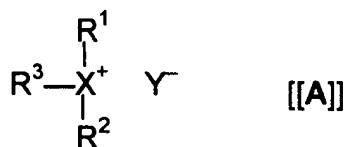


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8 wherein  $R^1$  and  $R^2$  each are independently selected from normal or branched  
9 alkyls containing a chain of at least 4 carbon atoms, with or without  
10 one or more substituents, or one or more heteroatoms;  
11  $R^3$  is an organic moiety containing a chain of at least 4 carbon atoms,  
12 with or without one or more substituents, or one or more heteroatoms;  
13 X is S, N— $R^4$  or P— $R^4$ ;  
14  $R^4$ , if present, is selected from H or an alkyl, aryl, alkylaryl, alkenylaryl or  
15 alkenyl group, preferably those having from about 1 to about 20  
16 carbon atoms, with or without one or more substituents, or one or  
17 more heteroatoms; and  
18  $Y^-$  is selected from the group consisting of hydroxide ion ( $OH^-$ ), halide  
19 ions, carboxylate ions, sulfate ion, organic sulfonate ions, and  
20 mixtures thereof.

15. (Original) The aqueous solution of claim 11 wherein the effective amount of the additive ranges from about 10:1 to about 1:10 in weight ratio with the onium compound.

16. (Original) The aqueous solution of claim 11 further comprises a separately added non-aqueous phase.

1 17. (Original) An aqueous solution comprising:  
2 water;  
3 a non-aqueous phase;  
4 at least one onium compound having a structure of the following formula  
5 having a cation and an anion  $Y^-$ :  
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wherein  $R^1$  and  $R^2$  each are independently selected from normal or branched alkyls containing a chain of at least 4 carbon atoms, with or without one or more substituents, or one or more heteroatoms;

$R^3$  is an organic moiety containing a chain of at least 4 carbon atoms, with or without one or more substituents, or one or more heteroatoms;

X is S,  $N-R^4$  or  $P-R^4$ ;

$R^4$ , if present, is selected from H or an alkyl, aryl, alkylaryl, alkenylaryl or alkenyl group, preferably those having from about 1 to about 20 carbon atoms, with or without one or more substituents, or one or more heteroatoms; and

$Y^-$  is selected from the group consisting of hydroxide ion ( $OH^-$ ), halide ions, carboxylate ions, sulfate ion, organic sulfonate ions, and mixtures thereof; and

at least one additive selected from the group consisting of carboxylic acids, sulfonic acids, organophosphonic acids, phenolic compounds, ether sulfates, phosphoric acid esters, sulfonated fatty acids, sulfated fatty acids, oligocarboxylic acids, and mixtures thereof, and alkali metal salts of these compounds and amine salts of these compounds,

where the treated onium compound partitions into the non-aqueous phase, and where the amount of the additive is sufficient to reduce the toxicity of the aqueous solution as compared with an identical aqueous solution having an absence of the additive.

18. (Original) The aqueous solution of claim 17 wherein the effective amount of the additive ranges from about 10:1 to about 1:10 in weight ratio with the onium compound.

19. (Original) The aqueous solution of claim 17 wherein the additive is selected from the group consisting of carboxylic acids, sulfonic acids, and mixtures thereof, alkali metal salts of these compounds and amine salts of these compounds.